वैदिक देवीसूक्तानि
vaidika devīsūktāni

Translation and explanation by :
हिमान्शु भालचन्द्र दवे
धर्मसिंह देसाई तान्त्रिकी संस्थान
नडीयाद
himānśu bhālacandra dave
Dharmsinh Desai Institute of Technology
Nadiad

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1 Preface :

I am very happy today, I am a fortunate person. For quite some time now, there was desire to translate and comment on the suktas on Devi — goddess Amba — found in Rigveda and Atharvaveda. As each Navaratri came closer, this desire grew, as my worship to Amba, but somehow I could not fullfill this desire. We are able to complete a work only when the Almighty desires us to do it.

Now-a-days when Navaratri celebrations have degenerated into rank commercialization and an occassion for noisy dances in name of worship of the Goddess, far away from the original intent of Navaratri, this little booklet, with its four Devi Suktas may provide a balancing force.

Readers will find basic translations into English for each mantra and some explanations. I believe that such text are untranslatable, or at least a translation is useless without supporting explanation. I have tried to explain the purport of the mantra as I have understood it. Reader will notice that the attitude taken is from Advait standpoint, because that is how I am trained. Philosophical standpoint apart, the explanations should still help a reader in meditating over the meaning of the suktas.

Vedas are the original source of all the investigations into nature of Ultimate Reality in our country, whatever be the religious background of the seeker. What is the concept of Devi according to these ancient texts? — this question may be answered by these suktas. In this search for the Ultimate Reality, one will find an answer to the question "who am I?"

If you, dear reader, find this useful in some way, my effort will be amply rewarded. If enough interest is there, I may try to provide Gujarati version also in future.

I dedicate this little booklet to all the women in my life, they contributed in my progress in journey of life in so many various ways.

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु श्रद्धारूपेण संस्थिता नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमोनमः ।

– Himanshu Bhalachandra Dave अश्विन शुक्ल प्रथमा, विक्रम : २०५५

2 Introduction :

These very important suktas from Rigveda and Atharvaveda give essence of concepts of माया, प्रकृति, ब्रह्मविद्या, तन्त्रोपासना *māyā, prakṛti, brahmavidyā, tantropāsanā* etc. They are rather deep and difficult to understand as per their original purport without proper background and thus most people simply recite them as a routine. If the recitation is done with understanding of the meaning, it will lead to very uplifting meditation.

The suktas are given in the order in which they are specified to be recited during Navaratri.

Though the शाक्तमत has adopted these as basic texts, a careful reader will find that they are non-sectarian.

The first sukta considered — रात्रिसूक्त *rātrisūkta* — worships भुवनेश्वरी *bhuvaneśvarī*, the goddess which is this Creation in its non-manifest form.

Second sukta is Ratri sukta as per Tantra and it forms a part of दुर्गासप्तशती *durgāsaptaśatī*.

Who is अंबा *aṃbā* ? Who or what is वाक् *vāk* ? What is the significance of the नवार्ण मन्त्र ॐ ऐं ह्रीँ क्लीँ चामुण्डायै विच्चे *navārṇa mantra Om̃ aiṃ hrī̃ klī̃ cāmuṇḍāyai vicce* ? these are some of the questions answered in the third sukta considered — देवी अथर्वशीर्ष *devī atharvaśīrṣa*.

The fourth sukta is ऋग्वेदीय देवीसूक्त *ṛgvedīya devīsūkta*. This sukta appears as mantras 1 to 8 of 125th sukta of 10th Adhyaya of 10th Mandala. I personally consider this sukta to be extremely important to understand the overall attitude of the Vedic Rishis in investigations of nature of reality. Sometimes in future I hope to be able to give a deatiled interpretation of the sukta, but here the reader will find my interpretation in summarized form.

The reader should first read through a sukta with its straight translation given with each mantra. The language of most of the mantra is reasonably simple, though the meaning is not. Get familiar with the general concepts and descriptions given in the sukta, the overall tone and content. Then read the Introduction (once more if you have tried to read it already.)

In all the discussions given below, remember that the gods and goddesses mentioned are internal to one's mind and not someting external. This is very important. A lay person points to the sky and says "God up there", but all the gods, at least the Vedic gods, are within you. What we are going to talk about here are processes going on within our mind.

But let us begin at the begining. Assuming that you have at least glanced through the original texts of the suktas, we start with the following mantra from तैत्तिरीय उपनिषद्

taittirīya upaniṣad, as शान्तिपाठ *śāntipāṭha* :

अहं वृक्षस्य रेरिवा कीर्तिः पृष्ठं गिरेरिव ।

ऊर्ध्वपवित्रो वाजिनीव स्वमृतं ।

अस्मि द्रविणँ सवर्चसम् ।

सुमेधा अमृतोऽक्षितः ।

इति त्रिशङ्कोर्वेदानुवचनम् ॥

[तैत्ति. उप. I – 10]

ahaṃ vṛkṣasya rerivā kīrtiḥ pṛṣṭhaṃ gireriva |

ūrdhvapavitro vājinīva svamṛtaṃ |

asmi draviṇã savarcasam |

sumedhā amṛto'kṣitaḥ |

iti triśaṅkorvedānuvacanam ||

[*taitti. upa.* I – 10]

I am the director of this Tree (that is this World), my fame is high like peak of a mountain. I am the most pure and sacred. Like Surya giving food, I am also pure and immortal. I have brilliant wealth (in form of Self-knowledge), sharp intelligence — immortal and non-decaying. This is the declaration of Rishi Trishanku after contact with the Ultimate Reality. [1]

The highest realization according to our forefathers is that "only I am there, this all is me only — अहं ब्रह्मास्मि । *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* |. There is no truth beyond this Truth. I am pure Existence (सत् *sat*), I am brilliant with knowledge (चित् *cit*), I am immortal, sacred, non-decaying (आनन्द *ānanda*).

The question arises : "If I am ब्रह्म *brahma*, why do I see others, why do I see the World?"

Of course such a question arises in the mind of a person who has not yet reached that stage of realization.

How does the concept and perceptions about the World arise? If I am in fact the only real exitence, then there is something which makes me see the world. But that something can not be external to or different from me, because I am the only existence. As गौडपादाचार्य *gauḍapādācārya* says in his famous commentary कारिका

[1] For method of interpreting this mantra, see H.B.Dave "A New Approach to Interpretation of Vedas", a paper read at 39th All India Oriental Conference, Baroda

kārikā on माण्डुक्य उपनिषद् *māṇḍukya upaniṣad*, "देवस्य एषः स्वभावः *devasya eṣaḥ svabhāvaḥ*" — "this is how I am". It is me myself who creates this World for me.

What is there in me which provides this Creation? We can get some clue from the following mantra from Rigveda. This mantra is part of सन्ध्या *sandhyā*, a kind of daily meditation done by Brahmins (some of the Sandhi in the original text has been resolved for easier understanding) :

ॐ ऋतञ्च सत्यञ्च अभीद्धात् तपसोऽध्यजायत । ततो रात्र्यजायत । ततः समुद्रो अर्णवः । समुद्रात् अर्णवात् अधि संवत्सरो अजायत । अहोरात्राणि विदधत् विश्वस्य मिषतो वशी । सूर्याचन्द्रमसौ धाता यथापूर्वमकल्पयत् । दिवञ्च पृथिवीञ्च अन्तरिक्षम् अथो स्वः ॥ [अघमर्षण ऋषिः अनुष्टुप् छन्दः, ऋ. सं. VIII - 8 - 48]

Oṃ ṛtañca satyañca abhīddhāt tapaso'dhyajāyata | tato rātryajāyata | tataḥ samudro arṇavaḥ | samudrāt arṇavāt adhi saṃvatsaro ajāyata | ahorātrāṇi vidadhat viśvasya miṣato vaśī | sūryācandramasau dhātā yathāpūrvamakalpayat | divañca pṛthivīñca antarikṣam atho svaḥ || [aghamarṣaṇa ṛṣiḥ anuṣṭup chandaḥ, ṛ. saṃ. VIII - 8 - 48]

{ अभीद्ध *abhīddha* – inflammed, shinning;} **From the active *Light* were created ऋत *ṛta*, (the Ultimate Truth, the Law) and सत्य *satya* (the Truth as understandable by human mind). From the [same] Light, the *Night* was generated. From the Night was generated the *Ocean*, having *waves*. Further, from the wavy ocean was created the concept of *Time*, which provide *Day* and *Night* and control all those who *blink their eyes*. After that, the *Support*, who is at the highest level of Creation, created, like in previous occassions, the *Sun*, the *Moon*, the *Heaven*, the *Earth* and the *Sky*.**

Let us decode this mantra, which describes how concept of duality, i.e. a World separate from me, arises. It is used in Sandhya for a kind of mental purification (Full discussion about Sandhya at some other occassion.)

the Light means परब्रह्म *parabrahma*, my purest from; this Light does तप *tapa*, a kind of patient waiting, but with inherent and unavoidable agitation. My purest form has no desires, no worries, no plans, but there is inherent "movement". This "movement" is variously described as शक्ति, प्रकृति, महामाया *śakti, prakṛti, mahāmāyā* and the "steady" aspect of Parabrahma is called शिव, पुरुष, etc. In fact the concept of the Ultimate Reality, which is at once "steady" and "moving", both शान्त *śānta* and चञ्चल *cañcala*, in an indistinguishable way, is represented in Indian iconography by अर्धनारीनरेश्वर मूर्ति *ardhanārīnareśvara mūrti*, which has confounded many a art lovers. As we shall see below, it is this "instability" that is called the goddess, देवी *devī* here in these suktas. Our forefathers gave a very nice analogy by saying that we have here a couple — a husband and a wife.

Doubt : You are talking about two properties of Brahma, which is supposed to be without attributes.
Reply : No, I am not talking in terms of properties or attributes of Brahma. Brahma is without properties, but it is the limitations of our mind (see below) which forces us to talk in terms of "steadyness", "movement", etc. There is no way our mind can know about the Brahma, which *seems* to have these attributes.
Doubt : But then it is futile to talk about such a Brahma.
Reply : Yes and No. It depends upon what you want. If you persue your seeking to the final goal, you have to some how come to terms with the attributeless Brahma. Various people do this in different ways. All the paths lead to Him ultimately.

ऋत *ṛta* the ultimate truth, our human mind is limited and it can not really understand the Truth, i.e., the Law by which God operates; though we can never understand fully this Law, it is very much there and it is given a name **ऋत** *ṛta*.

सत्य *satya* the Ultimate Reality, the Truth as can be understood by me, a human being, whose mind is limited.
What is this limitation of human mind? In brief, our mind works by categorizing, i.e., by giving names to things, by pointing out things, as "this is a pen, this is a cow, this is a tree", etc. This is a sever limitation of our mind, because, the Ultimate Reality can not be categorized.

the Night the word **रात्रि** *rātri* is used in Vedas to denote several different ideas. The Night is Darkness — darkness of Ignorance. What ignorance? Ignorance about my true self, i.e., the illusion that there are some things different from me. Thus out of the "movement" part of me, from my **शक्ति** *śakti* is generated my illusion that there are things separate from me. This illusion is called the Night here. My glorious Self playfully hypnotizes itself in believing that there are things other than me. In fact, at many places in Vedas, the word **रात्रि** *rātri* is used to denote this **शक्ति** *śakti* — ability or tendency of **परब्रह्म** to hypnotize itself in believing in something which is not there.

the Ocean all throughout the Vedas, "water" is used to denote consciousness. A man is a conscious being. Generally we exhibit at least three levels of consciousness :

- the surface consciousness; the Vedic code name for its awarer is **अग्नि** *agni*;
- the higher consciousness; the Vedic code name for its awarer is **वायु** *vāyu*;
- the highest level of consciousness; the Vedic code name for its awarer is **सूर्य, इन्द्र** *sūrya, indra*;

Also, there is subconscious — called पितृ *pitṛ*. All these levels of consciousness form a "mass", which is compared with a mass of water.

waves when we are thinking or doing some work consciously, there are bursts of thoughts arising and subsiding on the surface consciousness. These are called "waves"; (अर्ण *arṇa* – being agitated.)
So our mantra says that the Night — the Fundamental Ignorance gave rise to consciousness, with its waves in forms of thoughts. Our consciousness, *as we are aware of*, itself is result of the ignorance.

Time once the consciousness, with its thought process was generated, the concept of time was generated, i.e., I am aware of passge of Time. Unless there is awareness of time, all phenomena related or dependent on time are not present. For example, one does not hear sounds, nor see anything, can not do any physical work, etc. Thus the physical world as we know of will not exist without Time.

Day and Night waking and sleeping states of one's mind; or,
day : cutting off oneself from mundane thoughts; meditating mind;
night : a mind engrossed in day-to-day mundane thoughts; The mantra says that Time created the two major states of human mind – meditating and non-meditating.

blink eyes means all those creatures which pass through various states of awareness, mainly awake and meditative states.

the Support I myself am the support, the basis, of the Creation. Just as the rope, रज्जु *rajju* is the support for the snake, सर्प *sarpa* seen as an illusion, Parabrahma, i.e., I am the basis for all that I see. [2] This support is the root of the Tree of Creation, it is at the highest level, स्वः *svaḥ*.

like previous occasions यथापूर्वम् *yathāpūrvam* – this Creation does not occur only once, it occurs again and again. When I become introspective, the Creation gets dissolved into myself and when I become extrovert and become aware of the World, it gets created again.

Sun my self in its purest form, but of which I am aware;

[2]The example of a snake seen by a man in place of the rope in darkness is a very common illustration used by Indian philosophers to decide cause of perception of the World. If we can decide why one sees a snake where really there is a rope, then we can decide the cause of the world. Various hypotheses are put forward to explain the phenomena, depending on the school of philosophy to which one belongs. Even amongst all the diverse opinions, they agree on one thing, that the rope is the basis of the illusion.

Moon my mind, the thinking, desiring, deciding part of my self; the word is also used some times to denote सोम *soma*, the Alpha. [3]

Heaven my state when I am totally absorbed in myself, cut-off from the external world and thoughts relating to the world; when I am in meditative state; (दिव् *div*).

Earth my state of mind when I am aware of the external world and I am reacting to it; (पृथिवी *pṛthivī*).

Sky my mental state when I am aware of my internal world, cut-off from the external world, but thinking and dealing with ideas arising from my self; (अन्तरिक्ष *antarikṣa*).

All of us aware of our पृथिवी *pṛthivī* state, i.e., the state in which we say that "I am awake."
When you are hearing some good music or listening to some poetry or praying, you are in your अन्तरिक्ष *antarikṣa* state.
Some of you who are blessed enough to be able to do meditation, in deep meditation you are in your दिव् *div* state.
Or, roughly speaking, when you are awake you are in पृथिवी *pṛthivī* state, when dreaming in अन्तरिक्ष *antarikṣa* state and in दिव् *div* state when in deep sleep.

Thus creation is due to my own Sakti which is inseparable part of myself. This Sakti is called देवी, अंबा, पार्वती, भवानी *devī, aṃbā, pārvatī, bhavānī*, etc. by so many different names. {One more name which I, the author, like very much is हिरण्य *hiraṇya*, literally Gold. In fact, that is the more common a name for Sakti in Rigveda.}

In Vedic texts it is also called वाक् *vāk* — the Language or the Speech. Why the Language? We do not have space here for detailed explanation, but we shall give a brief account.

2.1 Vak - the Language :

We have seen the stages of Creation above. In order that this creation proceeds as given, some information has to be conveyed from each stage to the next stage. The information is carried in form of वाक्य *vākya* – "something being said" in some language. Vak – वाक् *vāk* is the set of such languages, or Speech. In other words, वाक् *vāk* is the method by which our brain works. Whatever we see, hear, think, decide – are all due to this वाक् *vāk*. Incidently this also explains the name अंबा *aṃbā*. The root अंब् *aṃb*

[3] see "A New Approach to Interpretation of Vedas", ibid.

(1 A) means "to sound." Thus Amba is one who makes sound – शब्द *śabda* – within myself, one who speaks within myself. Also, अंबकम् *aṃbakam* - an eye, something through which we "see", through which we percieve or are aware of something (as in त्र्यंबकं यजामहे . . . *tryaṃbakaṃ yajāmahe . . ..*) A careful reader should have noticed that there is no conflict between the meaning of अंबा *aṃbā* and त्र्यंबकः *tryaṃbakaḥ*. Vak is considered daughter of Rishi अम्भृण *ambhṛṇa*. The word अम्भृण *ambhṛṇa* (adj.) means powerful, mighty, great; roaring terribly; i.e. Parabrahma, by Vedic tradition, that is why Vak is called वागाम्भृणी *vāgāmbhṛṇī*.

In Rigveda, the Vak is described as having four types or levels, and some places upto seven levels. [4] Later Vedic literature has named these four levels of Vak as परा पश्यन्ती मध्यमा वैखरी *parā paśyantī madhyamā vaikharī*.

A number of other concepts in interpretation of Rigveda depends upon these concept of Languages of the Brain.

3 Rigvediya Ratri Sukta :

ऋग्वेदीय रात्रिसूक्त *ṛgvedīya rātrisūkta* :

This sukta occurs as mantras 1 to 8 in Rigveda, 10th Mandala, 10th Adyayay, 127th sukta.

This very deep sukta talks about Ratri, रात्रि, generally translated as the **Night**. What is Night? We have already discussed that in our Introduction, but htere is something more to the meaning of that word. Night may also mean deep sleep or deep meditation (निर्विकल्प समाधि *nirvikalpa samādhi*.)

The Night is very beneficial to mankind. It gives succour to all beings, observing this World by hers eyes (stars) and thus removing darkness by her own light. The darkness is called a kind of *debt*. In richa 7, *Usha*, sister of Ratri is prayed to. All these words require explanation.

3.1 Text and Translation and Explanation :

ॐ रात्री व्यख्यदायती पुरुत्रा देव्यक्षभिः । विश्वा अधि श्रियोऽधित ॥ १ ॥

Oṁ rātrī vyakhyadāyatī purutrā devyakṣabhiḥ | viśvā adhi śriyo'dhita || 1 ||

The night is coming; now that goddess by her eyes, observes many places. She has taken up all her splendour.

[4] For rexample, see [I - 164- 46 - 45]

The Night has manifested. She makes me percieve this world, through my Jivatma (जीवात्मा *jīvātmā*) which is endowed with senses (stars). She comes along with all the objects of these world.

Or, we may interprete as : in deep meditation, my Atma is just an observer and has taken up its own splendour.

Or, during deep sleep, the information received during the waking state is replayed, arranged and observed.

ओर्वप्रा अमर्त्या निवतो देव्युद्वतः । ज्योतिषा बाधते तमः ॥ २ ॥

orvaprā amartyā nivato devyudvataḥ | jyotiṣā bādhate tamaḥ || 2 ||

This immortal goddess has filled completely the wide, high and low regions, by her expanse. By her own light she is driving out darkness.

The immortal Maya has filled the three regions — दिव्, अन्तरिक्ष and पृथिवी *div*, *antarikṣa* and *pṛthivī* — by herself.

Night does not mean complete darkness, there is some light due to stars etc. Not that there is no knowledge, there is some knowledge, as provided by the sense organs of this Jeeva. This limited knowledge is also useful, because it does remove total ignorance. Compare with the following mantra of Rishi दीर्घतमस् *dīrghatamas* [ऋ. सं. I - 164 - 43]:

शकमयं धूममारादपश्यं विषुवता पर एनावरेण ।

śakamayaṃ dhūmamārādapaśyaṃ viṣuvatā para enāvareṇa |

I observe near me the smoke of burning cow-dung and by that all pervading common effect, discover the cause, i.e., the fire.

Thus the knowledge that one gains about the World around us, via one's senses, is not totally useless. It directs one's mind to the Ultimate Reality, it points the correct way. If there were no knowledge, then we would be like a stone.

This also shows the attitude of the Vedic Rishis to the human existence : it is a chance given to improve oneself.

Or, interpreting Night as Nirvikalpa Samadhi, there is knowledge about existence of one's self only. That "I" sense is also useful, because it points to the Basis, Paramatma.

निरु स्वसारमस्कृतोषसं देव्यायती । अपेदु हासते तमः ॥ ३ ॥

niru svasāramaskṛtoṣasaṃ devyāyatī | apedu hāsate tamaḥ || 3 ||

This Night, coming here, has driven away her own sister Usha. [But subsequently] darkness will go away from here.

Usha denotes the begining (down) of correct knowledge about one self. It may mean begining of Samadhi or a person reaching the "Dual mode" [5] where he has so much advanced in his understanding of the nature of Reality that he is simultaneously leading a "normal" life and at the same time totally disconnected internally. As examples of such persons in recent times we can mention Shri Ramana Maharshi, Shri Ramakirshna Paramahansa.

On arrival of Ratri the Night, the light of pure Atma (सूर्य *sūrya*) is replaced by light of stars. Even if Usha is not there, at least some light is there, with a promise that eventually there will be Usha again.

सा नो अद्य यस्या वयं नि ते यामन्नविक्ष्महि । वृक्षे न वसतिं वयः ॥ ४ ॥

sā no adya yasyā vayaṃ ni te yāmannavikṣmahi | vṛkṣe na vasatiṃ vayaḥ || 4 ||

On your arrival, just as birds [enter] their nets in trees and we also enter [in our homes] for rest. Such Night be today [benefial to us.]

This mantra shows that perhaps the interpretation of Night as Nirvikalpa Samadhi was more proper. This mantra is also an example of the principle of Reverse Analogy propounded by this author [6] where the roles of the two components of an analogy are reversed.

Birds denote "thoughts". Nesting in trees denote "subsiding in the network of brain cells". In samadhi the thoughts subside and we withdraw into our deepest self.

On the other hand, considering the Night as Maya, on its arrival, birds, i.e., thoughts, rest, take pleasure, in the Tree. Now tree denotes this Creation (see the Shantipath at the begining). We, that is my Atma, also rest in the World.

May such Night be beneficial to me, by showing me the correct path.

नि ग्रामासो अविक्षत नि पद्वन्तो नि पक्षिणः । नि श्येनासश्चिदर्थिनः ॥ ५ ॥

ni grāmāso avikṣata ni padvanto ni pakṣiṇaḥ | ni śyenāsaścidarthinaḥ || 5 ||

The people of the villages, those with feet, those birds, those Shyena birds who eye [thier prey] with desire, [all have come back to their home.]

The staright translation seems very mundane. ग्रामासः *grāmāsaḥ* – the people of village – means the routine or mundane thoughts, thoughts related to day to day living in this world;

पद्वन्तः *padvantaḥ* – those with feet – means the thoughts arising out of activity of sense organs;

[5] see "A New Approach to Interpretation of Vedas", ibid.

[6] see "A New Approach to Interpretation of Vedas", ibid.

पक्षिणः *pakṣiṇaḥ* – those birds – thoughts related to the emotions; and even

श्येनासः *śyenāsaḥ* – those Shyena birds – thoughts associated with invocation of सोम, i.e., those thoughts leading to meditation;

all are subsided into their respective abodes.

Even though "birds" are mentioned, Shyena birds, which throughout the Vedas is a code name for thoughts relating to Samadhi, are separately mentioned. They also desire something – the Soma, the Alpha state.

यावया वृक्यं वृकं यवय स्तेनमूर्म्ये । अथा नः सुतरा भव ॥ ६ ॥

yāvayā vṛkyaṃ vṛkaṃ yavaya stenamūrmye | athā naḥ sutarā bhava || 6 ||

O Urmi, keep away from us the she-wolf, the wolf, and thief and then allow us to go beyond you.

Urmi is another name for the Night, one who hides. May we complete succesfully the period during which you, the Night, are present without being troubled by :

wolf sleep; if one leads a life of day to day existence only, without doing any useful work or strive for knowledge, then one is leading a life in "sleep". Vedic traditions define three kinds of human life — one of knowledge which uplifts a person to release, second that of active work as enjoined in scripture, which ultimately leads to knowledge and release and third, that of तमस् *tamas*, complete darkness, the sleep, where a person just worries about day to day living.

she-wolf thoughts leading to sleep; a philosophy of life which leads to life of "sleep";

thief distrubing thoughts, like those of anger, hate, desire, craving, etc., negative thoughts. They are called thief because they take away the balance of my mind.

The seeker further prays to the Ratri that please allow me to go beyond you, let there be Usha. Let me understand the true nature of this Creation and go beyond it.

उप मा पेपिशत्तमः कृष्णं व्यक्तमस्थित । उष ऋणेव यातय ॥ ७ ॥

uṣa mā pepiśattamaḥ kṛṣṇaṃ vyaktamasthita | uṣa ṛṇeva yātaya || 7 ||

This extremely black coloured darkness, giving a layer of black colour and clearly visible darkness has come near me. O Usha, remove it like a debt.

This mantra may be compared agian with the mantra by Rishi दीर्घतमस् *dīrghatamas* mentioned earlier.

Interpreting the Night as Maya : the meaning is quite clear. The Night is clearly visible because this World seems to be very clearly visible. Every body is quite clear

that this world exists. The perception of the world is so strong that we are not ready to let go the idea of its existence in reality. It is near me, because it is accessible without any effort. You just open your eyes and the World is seen.

This mantra is also an example of Reverse Analogy. The debt is the main concept here and not the darkness. Just as to remove one's debt, one has to work and earn money, similarly to remove the "debt" that is created due to my belief in existence of this World, I must work and obtain knowledge.

Interpreting the Night as Samadhi : the seeker prays to Usha that let me go beyond Samadhi. Let me achieve the "dual mode". Accepting Samadhi as the final goal itself creats a debt. Remove this debt, because the highest stage of human development is not Samadhi, but "dual mode", what is variously described as **शाम्भवि मुद्रा** *śāmbhavi mudrā* or **विष्णुपद** *viṣṇupada.*

उप ते गा इवाकरं वृणीष्व दुहितर्दिवः । रात्रि स्तोमं न जिग्युषे ॥ ८ ॥

uṣa te gā ivākaraṃ vṛṇīṣva duhitardivaḥ | rātri stomaṃ na jigyuṣe || 8 ||

O goddess Night, just as a successful warrior is offered a congratulating poem, or just as cows [are given as present] similarly I have given this Stotra to you. Please accept it heartily, O daughter of Heaven.

Here Heaven represents Paramatma and Devi is called a daughter of Paramatma.

4 Ratri Sukta as per Tantra :

According to tradition, **दुर्गासप्तशती** *durgāsaptaśatī* is to be recited after the previous one. Here we give only a part of it, known as Ratri sukta as per Tantra **तन्त्रोक्तं रात्रिसूक्तम्** *tantroktaṃ rātrisuktam.* This sukta occurs as slokas 73 to 87 of **दुर्गासप्तशती** *durgāsaptaśatī.* It is in form of prayer made by **ब्रह्मा** *brahmā* to Devi when being attacked by two **असुराः** *asurāḥ* — **मधु** *madhu* and **कैटभ** *kaiṭabha.* In a way, it links up several concepts of Vedic religions and that way very important.

Tantric tradition considers this sukta as a major text and its contents shows why it is so.

4.1 Text and Translation and Explanation :

ॐ विश्वेश्वरीं जगद्धात्रीं स्थितिसंहारकारिणीम् ।
निद्रां भगवतीं विष्णोरतुलां तेजसः प्रभुः ॥ १ ॥

Oṁ viśveśvarīṃ jagaddhātrīṃ sthitisaṃhārakāriṇīm |
nidrāṃ bhagavatīṃ viṣṇoratulāṃ tejasaḥ prabhuḥ || 1 ||

[I worship] the goddess controlling this Universe, the support of this World, maintainer and destroyer [of this World.] [I worship] the Beneficial *Sleep*, the uncomparable splendour and authority of Vishnu.

Sleep – when God has absorbed the Universe in Himself after the destruction of the Creation, he is supposed to be sleeping (because he has no work to do!). This is called the Sleep. Refering to the Introduction, this Sleep is the state of deepest meditation of a person, when there is complete cut-off from the external and also internal perceptions.

The asurs Madhu and Kaitabha are said to be generated from the ear-wax of Vishnu. They are representing any kind of disturbance which will lead to injection of a Vritti, a thought-seed, in the mind that is meditating. Brahma, the Ego in Nirvikalpa Samadhi state, prays to the Sleep, the active component of myself, "please deal with this disturbance". This prayer, which seems to be occuring in a very uninteresting situation, explains the basis of Indian philosophy in brief.

The interpretation can be extended to the case of a person who has achieved dual-mode.

त्वं स्वाहा त्वं स्वधा त्वं हि वषट्कारः स्वरात्मिका ।
सुधा त्वमक्षरे नित्ये त्रिधा मात्रात्मिका स्थिता ॥ २ ॥

tvaṃ svāhā tvaṃ svadhā tvaṃ hi vaṣaṭkāraḥ svarātmikā |
sudhā tvamakṣare nitye tridhā mātrātmikā sthitā || 2 ||

O Devi, you are only svaha, svadha, vashatkar. The svara are a form of yours only. You are the nectar giving life. You are present in the form of three matras a, u and m of the indistructible syllable aum.

svaha – **स्वाहा** *svāhā* – when a person is doing any active work, he takes in information, analyses it and takes decisions. This activity in his mind is like offering oblations in Agni – agni that is his surface consciousness. Svaha is the word uttered following any such offering. When we are consciously doing any work, as if we are saying svaha, svaha, ..., that is the rhythm of the work. I do this work not for myself, I do it as an agent of God, that is the etymological meaning of svaha. Our Muslim friends also say "Bismillah" (I start in the name of God), almost same idea is here.

svadha – **स्वधा** *svadhā* – an invocation to oneself, during a meditation; this is a technical word; a thought sequence which leads one to deeper levels of meditation;

vashatkar – वषट्कारः *vaṣaṭkāraḥ* – another technical word; certain sounds and sound element sequences have direct effect on the deeper regions of the human brain – this was well known to Indian Rishis. Normally, when you hear any speech (or any sound), under normal circumstances the auditory and speech regions of Cerebral Cortex analyse it and try to find the meaning. This meaning conveys the knowledge content of that sound. It is this knowledge that is absorbed by the deeper levels of our self, by integrating it within the network of existing knowledge. As said before, certain sounds, under proper circumstances, will bypass this stages of analysis and go directly to the deeper regions of the brain. A rough and ready example is good, soothing music. You do not hear individual sound or note of the music, you "enjoy" the music. That kind of sound element is called वषट्कारः *vaṣaṭkāraḥ*.

svara – स्वरात्मिका *svarātmikā* – all the Language elements, at whatever level, are called svara.

nectar – सुधा *sudhā* – one which support my life, without Devi, there would not be life as we know it.

three matras – त्रिधा मात्रा *tridhā mātrā* – this directly refers to माण्डुक्य उपनिषद् *māṇḍukya upaniṣad* the sacred syllable aum ॐ, called अक्षरः *akṣaraḥ* (see below) has three and half matras, out of which the first three अ उ म् *a u m* are spoken and heard. The last half matra is called silent or unheard matra. As explained in detail in माण्डुक्य उपनिषद् *māṇḍukya upaniṣad*, the three matras represent the waking state, the dreaming state and the state of deep sleep, respectively. These are the three major states in which a person moves about.

aum – अक्षरः *akṣaraḥ* – aum is called akshara, indestructible, because it represents Paramatma.

अर्धमात्रास्थिता नित्या यानुच्चार्या विशेषतः ।
त्वमेव संध्या सावित्री त्वं देवी जननी परा ॥ ३ ॥

ardhamātrāsthitā nityā yānuccāryā viśeṣataḥ |
tvameva saṃdhyā sāvitrī tvaṃ devī jananī parā || 3 ||

You are the unpronouncable half matra at the end of aum. You are Sandhya, Savitri. O Devi, you are the original Mother.

half matra As we started to discuss above, the sacred syllable aum is considered to have a half matra, which is not pronounced or heard. Mandukya Upanishad says that it represents the basis on which all the three remaining states of mind

are standing. This state is called तुरीय *turīya*, the Fourth one. This is not a separate state of our mind, it is rather always present as the basis, only we are not aware of it, as it is our true self and there no way we can know it by means of our senses.

snadhya the process of extablishing link with Paramatma; Brahmins are expected to perform this as a ritual three times a day. A kind of meditation. A flavour of what is contained in Sandhya is already given in Introduction. There are two baic steps — atonement of sins committed during the day and जप *japa*, silent repetition, of Gayatri mantra.

savitri the content or meaning of the so called Gayatri mantra;
ॐ भूर्भुवः स्व । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गोदेवस्य धीमहि । धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Om̃ bhūrbhuvaḥ sva | tatsaviturvareṇyaṃ bhargodevasya dhīmahi | dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt ||

[I exist as awarer of three levels of fields] भूः, *same as the Earth,* भुवः *same as the Sky and* स्वः, *same as the Heaven. We worship That, Savita, who should be strived for, beneficial to all my thought processes; may He direct our intelligence [to Himself]*

Actually this is a prayer to one's self, because Savita is nothing but one's innermost Self, Atma. The word That तत् *tat* indicates that an equivalence is sought to be established between Atma and Paramatma.

Mother because every thing is created from you; see (4) below.

त्वयैतद्धार्यते विश्वं त्वयैतत्सृज्यते जगत् ।
त्वयैतत्पाल्यते देवि त्वमत्स्यन्ते च सर्वदा ॥ ४ ॥

tvayaitaddhāryate viśvaṃ tvayaitatsṛjyate jagat |
tvayaitatpālyate devi tvamatsyante ca sarvadā || 4 ||

You are supporting this Universe, you create this World, you sustain this [World]. [At the end of the Universe], you absorb in yourself everything.

Here, the idea that Devi is the cause of every thing is pointed out. A clear link to Vedanta.

विसृष्टौ सृष्टिरूपा त्वं स्थितिरूपा च पालने ।
तथा संहृतिरूपान्ते जगतोऽस्य जगन्मये ॥ ५ ॥

visṛṣṭau sṛṣṭirūpā tvaṃ sthitirūpā ca pālane |
tathā saṃhṛtirūpānte jagato'sya jaganmaye || 5 ||

At the time of generation of this World, you are Srushti – the Creation, while the world continues to exist you are Sthiti – its stability, and at the time of Dissolution you are Samhriti – the Destroyer

महाविद्या महामाया महामेधा महास्मृतिः ।
महामोहा च भवती महादेवी महासुरी ॥ ६ ॥

mahāvidyā mahāmāyā mahāmedhā mahāsmṛtiḥ |
mahāmohā ca bhavatī mahādevī mahāsurī || 6 ||

You are the ultimate knowledge, illusion, intelligence, memory, ignorance, goddess and controller.

प्रकृतिस्त्वं च सर्वस्य गुणत्रयविभाविनी ।
कालरात्रिर्महारात्रिर्मोहरात्रिश्च दारुणा ॥ ७ ॥

prakṛtistvaṃ ca sarvasya guṇatrayavibhāvinī |
kālarātrirmahārātrirmoharātriśca dāruṇā || 7 ||

You are the Prakriti — the Fundamental material — which creates the three Gunas — the properties. You are three kinds of Night — Time, the Fundamental and Ignorance

प्रकृति *prakṛti* – the material cause of the Universe; this concept comes from सांख्य *sāṃkhya* philosophy. Prakriti is ever present material cause of the Universe, but it is अचेतन *acetana*, without an activating principle. That is provided by पुरुष *puruṣa*, who activates Prakriti but is aloof from it.

गुणत्रय *guṇatraya* – the three Fundamental properties : सत्वस् रजस् तमस् *satvas rajas tamas* which can be variously interpreted, depending on situation. Generally Tamas denotes the gross aspect, Rajas denote the active or useful aspect and Satvas denotes the higher or philosophical aspect of any entity. For example, when you are hearing some music, the sound waves are Tamas, the melody is Rajas and the abstract concepts generated in your mind due to the music is Satvas aspect of the music.

कालरात्रि *kālarātri* – the illusion in form of Time; please refer to our explanation of the Sandhya mantra in Introduction;

महारात्रि *mahārātri* – the Original Mistake or Fundamental Ignorance; please refer to our explanation of the Sandhya mantra in Introduction;

मोहरात्रि *moharātri* – once the creatures of this Universe are created, they are under the spell of an ignorance which makes them believe of existence in reality of the World. That false notion is called the Ignorance.

त्वं श्रीस्त्वमीश्वरी त्वं ह्रीस्त्वं बुद्धिर्बोधलक्षणा ।

लज्जा पुष्टिस्तथा तुष्टिस्त्वं शान्तिः क्षान्तिरेव च ॥ ८ ॥

tvaṃ śrīstvamīśvarī tvaṃ hrīstaṃ buddhirbodhalakṣaṇā |
lajjā puṣṭistathā tuṣṭistvaṃ śāntiḥ kṣāntireva ca || 8 ||

You are Shri – the Wealth, Ishvari – the controller, Hri – modesty, and intelligence in form of perceptions. You are bashfulness, enrichment, satisfaction, peace and forgiveness.

These are all higher functions of human mind. Shri denotes the mental ability to approach the Ultimate Reality, it is generally called wealth and translated as such.

खड्गिनी शूलिनी घोरा गदिनी चक्रिणी तथा ।
शङ्खिनी चापिनी बाणभुशुण्डीपरिधायुधा ॥ ९ ॥

khaṅginī śūlinī ghorā gadinī cakriṇī tathā |
śaṅkhinī cāpinī bāṇabhuśuṇḍīparidhāyudhā || 9 ||

You have these different forms of representations.

Actually, each of these forms has significance, but for lack of space we are not going into details of iconographic science.

सौम्या सौम्यतराशेषसौम्येभ्यस्त्वतिसुन्दरी ।
परापराणां परमा त्वमेव परमेश्वरी ॥ १० ॥

saumyā saumyatarāśeṣasaumyebhyastvatisundarī |
parāparāṇāṃ paramā tvameva parameśvarī || 10 ||

You are Saumya and more Saumya. You are even most beautiful amongst all the Saumya things. You are Parameshvari, beyond the things *near* and *far*.

सौम्य *saumya* – pleasing, agreeable; something which takes one to deeper or meditative state of mind, which establishes the Alpha state. When we see something beautiful, for example, a natural scennary, for a few moments we are cut off from the external world and go deeper into ourselves, perfectly at peace. Different things have different amount of such effect on us.

near and far – near means things accessible to human senses and mind, far means things not easily accessible to even mind.

Devi is beyond things near and far, i.e., to reach her, we will have to make an effort beyond what we normally do in our usual activities.

यच्च किंचित् क्वचिद्वस्तु सदसद्वाखिलात्मिके ।
तस्य सर्वस्य या शक्तिः सा त्वं किं स्तूयसे तदा ॥ ११ ॥

yacca kiṃcit kvacidvastu sadasadvākhilātmike |
tasya sarvasya yā śaktiḥ sā tvaṃ kiṃ stūyase tadā || 11 ||

O Omnipresent Devi, whatever things are really there or really not there, and whetever is their ability, you are verily that. Under this condition how can we pray to you?

See Introduction for explanation of the basic concept involved.

Our words will be futile in praying to you, so how do we pray to you?

यया त्वया जगत्स्रष्टा जगत्पात्यत्ति यो जगत् ।
सोऽपि निद्रावशं नीतः कस्त्वां स्तोतुमिहेश्वरः ॥ १२ ॥

yayā tvayā jagatsraṣṭā jagatpātyatti yo jagat |
so'pi nidrāvaśaṃ nītaḥ kastvāṃ stotumiheśvaraḥ || 12 ||

You have put to sleep even Vishnu, who creates, maintains and destroys this World, under that condition who is able to pray to you?

Paramatma is asleep under the spell of His own Maya.

विष्णुः शरीरग्रहणमहमीशान एव च ।
कारितास्ते यतोऽतस्त्वां कः स्तोतुं शक्तिमान् भवेत् ॥ १३ ॥

viṣṇuḥ śarīragrahaṇamahamīśāna eva ca |
kāritāste yato'tastvāṃ kaḥ stotuṃ śaktimān bhavet || 13 ||

You have given a body (or a form) to myself, Lord Vishnu and Lord Mahadeva, so who has ablity to pray to you?

This is very interesting. This mantra points out that even the concepts of the three Gods — Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh — is due to Maya, and thus not the Ultimate Reality. Rigveda also clearly says :
एकम् सत् विप्रा वहुधा वदन्ति *ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti*

the One Reality is described variously by learned persons.

सा त्वमित्थं प्रभावैः स्वैरुदारैर्देवि संस्तुता ।
मोहयैतौ दुराधर्षावसुरौ मधुकैटभौ ॥ १४ ॥

sā tvamitthaṃ prabhāvaiḥ svairudārairdevi saṃstutā |
mohayaitau durādharṣāvasurau madhukaiṭabhau || 14 ||

O Devi, you are praised due to these your beneficial abilities. Please put under a spell these two Asurs, Madhu and Kaitabha, who are difficult to battle with.

Who are Madhu and Kaitabha? Madhu denotes form of anything. Kaitabha denotes

name of anything. When Vishnu is asleep, i.e., I am engrossed in day-to-day routine activities, out of Vishu's ears are created these two demons. *Ears* denote the information collecting ability of Vishnu. So out of the basic brain activity of mine, the two demons — name and form — are generated. They attack Brahma, the clear perception about the Creation, and try to enforce a world view in terms of categorization by names and forms. These two demons are difficult to conquer.

प्रबोधं च जगत्स्वामी नीयतामच्युतो लघु ।
बोधश्च क्रियतामस्य हन्तुमेतौ महासुरौ ॥ १५ ॥

prabodhaṃ ca jagatsvāmī nīyatāmacyuto laghu |
bodhaśca kriyatāmasya hantumetau mahāsurau || 15 ||

Please wake up Vishnu quickly and also create an idea in him to kill these two mighty demons.

The meaning is clear in view of our explanation of the previous mantra.

5 Devi Atharvashirsha :

अथर्ववेदीय देव्यथर्वशीर्ष *atharvavedīya devyatharvaśīrṣa*

This sukta from Atharvaveda is related to (in fact it borrows from) Rigveda, the mantras 1 to 8 of 125th sukta of 10th Adhyaya of the 10th Mandala. This sukta is a link between philosophy (**दर्शन** *darśana*) and techniques (**तन्त्र** *tantra*). Yogic techniques do not go very far without proper philosophy.

This sukta is considered to be very important in Atharvaveda. It is a tradition to recite this sukta before Durgasaptashati. It gives a rare insight into some of the deep concepts in Tantra and as such many teachers would not explain this sukta easily.

5.1 Text Translation and exaplanation :

ॐ सर्वे वै देवा देवीमुपतस्थुः कासि त्वं महादेवीति ॥ १ ॥ *Oṁ sarve vai devā devīmupatasthuḥ kāsi tvaṃ mahādevīti || 1 ||*

All the gods, going near the Goddess, asked "who are you, O mighty Goddess?"

साब्रवीत् अहं ब्रह्मस्वरूपिणी ।
मत्तः प्रकृतिपुरुषात्मकं जगत् ।
शून्यं चाशून्यं च ॥ २ ॥

sābravīt ahaṃ brahmasvarūpiṇī |
mattaḥ prakṛtipuruṣātmakaṃ jagat |
śūnyaṃ cāśūnyaṃ ca || 2 ||

She said : I am an aspect o Brahma. From me this Universe, in form of Prakruti and Purush, is generated; which is both void and non-void.

The Universe is existing or not existing depending upon your view point or plane of reference or level of reality. We have already explained Prakruti and Purush.

अहमानन्दानानन्दौ । अहम् विज्ञानाविज्ञाने । अहं ब्रह्माब्रह्मणी वेदितव्ये ।
अहं पञ्चभूतान्यपञ्चभुतानि । अहमखिलं जगत् ॥ ३ ॥

ahamānandānānandau | aham vijñānāvijñāne | ahaṃ brahmābrahmaṇī veditavye |
ahaṃ pañcabhūtānyapañcabhutāni | ahamakhilaṃ jagat || 3 ||

I am both bliss and non-bliss. I am knowledge and non-knowledge. I am brahma and non-brahma. The five primodial principles and non-principles is myself. I am the whole percieved Universe.

Doubt : Bliss and non-bliss, or knowledge/non-knowledge are understanable, but saying brahma/non-brahma does not make sense.

Reply : Remember that Devi is an inseparable part of the Attributeless Paramatma. She is beyond the Creation as indicated by Brahma or the non-manifest state called Abrahma.

वेदोऽहमवेदोऽहम् । विद्याहम् अविद्याहम् ।
अजाहमनजाहम् । तिर्यक्चाहम् ॥ ४ ॥

vedo'hamavedo'ham | vidyāham avidyāham |
ajāhamanajāham | tiryakcāham || 4 ||

I am Veda (knowledge about brahma) and non-knowledge. I am learning and ignorance. I am unborn and also born. I am up, down and crosswards.

The purport of these mantras is that Devi is beyond the usual characterization.

अहं रुद्रेभिर्वसुभिश्चरामि । अहमादित्यैरुत विश्वदेवैः ।
अहं मित्रावरुणोभा बिभर्मि । अहमिन्द्राग्नी अहमश्विनोभा ॥ ५ ॥

ahaṃ rudrebhirvasubhiścarāmi | ahamādityairuta viśvadevaiḥ |
ahaṃ mitrāvaruṇobhā bibharmi | ahamindrāgnī ahamaśvinobhā || 5 ||

I move about in form of Rudra and Vasu. I move about as Aditya and All-gods. I sustain Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Agni and both the Ashvinas.

अहं सोमं त्वष्टारं पूषणं भगं दधामि ।
अहं विष्णुमुरुक्रमं ब्रह्माणमुत प्रजापतिं दधामि ॥ ६ ॥

ahaṃ somaṃ tvaṣṭāraṃ pūṣaṇaṃ bhagaṃ dadhāmi |
ahaṃ viṣṇumurukramaṃ brahmāṇamuta prajāpatiṃ dadhāmi || 6 ||

I convey Soma, Tvasta, Pusha and Bhaga. I bring Vishnu with wide foorsteps, Brahma and Prajapati.

अहं दधामि द्रविणं हविष्मते सुप्राव्ये यजमानाय सुन्वते ।अहं राष्ट्री संगमनी वसूनां चिकितुषी प्रथमा यज्ञियानाम् ।
अहं सुवे पितरमस्य मूर्द्धन्मम योनिरप्स्वन्तः समुद्रे ।
य एवं वेद ।स दैवीं सम्पदमाप्नोति ॥ ७ ॥

ahaṃ dadhāmi draviṇaṃ haviṣmate suprāvye yajamānāya sunvate |
ahaṃ rāṣṭrī saṃgamanī vasūnāṃ cikituṣī prathamā yajñiyānām |
ahaṃ suve pitaramasya mūrddhanmama yonirapsvantaḥ samudre |
ya evaṃ veda | sa daivīṃ sampadamāpnoti || 7 ||

I bring Wealth with Havi for a yajaman who gives the best Havi to gods and effuses Soma. I am the Empresss of this whole Universe. I give wealth to worshippers. I am the observer and the first amongst those worth worshipping. I create on myself (as basis of all) the primodial elements (like Akash etc.) My abode is in the Waters of Samudra (the consciousness of self awareness). One who knows this obtains divine wealth.

त देवा अब्रुवन् नमो देव्यै महादेव्यै शिवायै सततं नमः ।
नमः प्रकृत्यै भद्रायै नियताः स्म ताम् ॥ ८ ॥

ta devā abruvan namo devyai mahādevyai śivāyai satataṃ namaḥ |
namaḥ prakṛtyai bhadrāyai niyatāḥ sma tām || 8 ||

Then the gods said : Namaskars to the goddess, the great goddess. namaskars always to the goddess who is beneficial to all. Namaskars to the goddess who is the Nature and graceful. We, followers of rules, pay our repects to her.

तमग्निवर्णां तपसा ज्वलन्तीं वैरोचनीं कर्मफलेषु जुष्टाम् ।
दुर्गां देवीं शरणं प्रपद्यामहेऽसुरान्नाशयित्र्यै ते नमः ॥ ९ ॥

tamagnivarṇāṃ tapasā jvalantīṃ vairocanīṃ karmaphaleṣu juṣṭām |
durgāṃ devīṃ śaraṇaṃ prapadyāmahe'surānnāśayitryai te namaḥ || 9 ||

She, with colour of Agni, shining with knowledge, bright, being worshipped

to obtain fruits of actions, we are in her refuge. O Devi, destroyer of Asura, namaskars to you.

देवीं वाचमजनयन्त देवास्तां विश्वरूपाः पशवो वदन्ति ।
सा नो मन्द्रेष्मूर्जं दुहाना धेनुवाग्स्मानुप सुष्टुतैतु ॥ १० ॥

devīṃ vācamajanayanta devāstāṃ viśvarupāḥ paśavo vadanti |
sā no mandreṣmūrjaṃ duhānā dhenuvāgsmānupa suṣṭutaitu || 10 ||

The gods (of the form of Prana) created the shining Vak, which is spoken by animals of all types. She, like a Kamadhenu, pleasure-giving, giving food and strength, Vak be satisfied by our prayers and come near us.

All the living creatures have their brains working with help of the Vak. Vak gives food — all kinds of perceptions, pleasure — bliss and strength — intelligence.

कालरात्रीं ब्रह्मस्तुतां वैष्णवीं स्कन्दमातरं ।
सरस्वतीमदितीं दक्षदुहितरं नमामः पावना शिवाम् ॥ ११ ॥

kālarātrīṃ brahmastutāṃ vaiṣṇavīṃ skandamātaraṃ |
sarasvatīmaditīṃ dakṣaduhitaraṃ namāmaḥ pāvanā śivām || 11 ||

To the Night in form of Time, the power of Vishnu, prayed by Vedas, mother of Skanda (Parvati, Shivashakti), Sarasvati (Brahmashakti), mother of gods Aditi, and daughter of Daksha (Sati), destroyer of sins, beneficial Bhagvati, we convey our namaskars.

महालक्ष्म्यै च विद्महे सर्वशक्त्यै धीमहि ।
तन्नो देवी प्रचोदयात् ॥ १२ ॥

mahālakṣmyai ca vidmahe sarvaśaktyai dhīmahi |
tanno devī pracodayāt || 12 ||

We know the Mahalaxmi and meditate on her, the all-powerful one. May that goddess direct us in [cordect] direction.

अदितिर्ह्यजनिष्ट दक्ष या दुहिता तव ।
तां देवा अन्वजायन्त भद्रा अमृतबन्धवः ॥ १३ ॥

aditirhyajaniṣṭa dakṣa yā duhitā tava |
tāṃ devā anvajāyanta bhadrā amṛtabandhavaḥ || 13 ||

O daksha, your daughter Aditi gave birth to immortal gods,worth praying.

कामो योनिः कमला वज्रपाणिर्गुहा हसा मातरिश्वाभ्रमिन्द्रः ।
पुनर्गुहा सकला मायया च पुरुच्यैषा विश्वमातादितिविद्योम् ॥ १४ ॥

kāmo yoniḥ kamalā vajrapāṇirguhā hasā mātariśvābhramindraḥ |
punarguhā sakalā māyayā ca purucyaiṣā viśvamātāditividyom || 14 ||

काम क, योनि ए, कमला ई, वज्रपाणि ल, गुहा ह्रीं, ह, स, मातरिश्वा क, अभ्र ह, इन्द्र ल, ह्रीं, स, क, ल, माया ह्रीं, these are the root knowledge about the Mother of the whole universe and an aspect of brahma.

The mantra gives the following matras for meditation : कएईलह्रीं, हसकहलह्रीं,सकलह्रीं,

ka·eīlahrīṃ, hasakahalahrīṃ,sakalahrīṃ,

This is a very important mantra for Tantra. It is said to have six types of meanings : भावार्थ, वाच्यार्थ सम्प्रदायार्थ, कौलिकार्थ, रहस्यार्थ, तत्वार्थ

bhāvārtha, vācyārtha sampradāyārtha, kaulikārtha, rahasyārtha, tatvārtha.

Some commentators show even more meanings to the level of meaning of individual letter.

एषाऽऽत्मशक्तिः । एषा विश्वमोहिनी । पाशाङ्कुशधनुर्बाणधरा ।

एषा श्रीमहाविद्या । य एव वेद स शोकं तरति ॥ १५ ॥

eṣā''tmaśaktiḥ | eṣā viśvamohinī | pāśāṅkuśadhanurbāṇadharā |
eṣā śrīmahāvidyā | ya eva veda sa śokaṃ tarati || 15 ||

She is the power of Paramatma. She is the one to bewitch all. She puts on tongs, Ankusha, bow and arrows. She is Shri MahaVidya. One who knows this well overcomes sadness.

नमस्ते अस्तु भगवति मातरस्मान् पाहि सर्वतः ॥ १६ ॥

namaste astu bhagavati mātarasmān pāhi sarvataḥ || 16 ||

O Bhagavati, these namaskars to you. O mother, protect us in all ways.

सैषाष्टौ वसवः । सैषैकादश रुद्राः । सैषा द्वादशादित्याः ।
सैषा विश्वेदेवाः सोमपा असोमपाः च । सैषा यातुधाना असुरा रक्षांसि पिशाचा यक्षाः सिद्धाः ।
सैषा सत्वरजतमसांसि ।
सैषा ब्रह्माविष्णुरुद्ररूपिणी । सैषा प्रजापतीन्द्रमनवः
सैषा ग्रहनक्षत्रज्योतिः ।
सैषा कलाकाष्ठादिकालरूपिणी । तामहं प्रणोमि नित्यम् ।
पापापहारिणीं देवीं भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रदायिनीम् ।
अनन्तां विजयां शुद्धां शरण्यां शिवदां शिवाम् ॥ १७ ॥

saiṣāṣṭau vasavaḥ | saiṣaikādaśa rudrāḥ | saiṣā dvādaśādityāḥ|

saiṣā viśvedevāḥ somapā asomapāḥ ca | saiṣā yātudhānā asurā rakṣāṃsi piśācā yakṣāḥ siddhāḥ|
saiṣā satvarajatamasāṃsi |
saiṣā brahmāviṣṇurudrarūpiṇī | saiṣā prajāpatīndramanavaḥ
saiṣā grahanakṣatrajyotiḥ |
saiṣā kalākāṣṭhādikālarūpiṇī| tāmahaṃ praṇomi nityam |
pāpāpahāriṇīṃ devīṃ bhuktimuktipradāyinīm |
anantāṃ vijayāṃ śuddhāṃ śaraṇyāṃ śivadāṃ śivām || 17 ||

She is these eight vasus. She is the eleven Rudras. She is the tweleve Adityas. She is the All-gods — drinking Soma or non-drinking. She is Yatudhan, Rakshahas, Asuras, Pishachas, Yakshas and Siddhas. She is Satva, Rajas and Tamas. She is Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. She is Prajapati, Indra and Manu. She is the planets, stars and constellations. She is various measures of Time. She is destroyer of sins, giver of both enjoyment and Moksha, without end, giving victory [over distractions of Samsar], pure, worth taking refuge, giver of peace, peace personified, we pray to her.

In Vedic texts two types of gods are shown — those who drink Soma, सोमपा *somapā* and those who drink ghee, घृतपा *ghṛtapā*. The first type of gods represent various regions and activities of our brain while in deep meditation, while the second type of gods denote regions and activities of brain while one is doing some mental activity.

Yatudhan are a kind of demons.

वियदीकारसंयुक्तं वीतिहोत्रसमन्वितम् ।
अर्धेन्दुलसितं देव्या बीजं सर्वार्थसाधकम् ॥ १८ ॥

viyadīkārasaṃyuktaṃ vītihotrasamanvitam |
ardhendulasitaṃ devyā bījaṃ sarvārthasādhakam || 18 ||

एवमेकाक्षरं ब्रह्म यतयः शुद्धचेतसः ।
ध्यायन्ति परमान्दमया ज्ञानाम्बुराशयः ॥ १९ ॥

evamekākṣaraṃ brahma yatayaḥ śuddhacetasaḥ |
dhyāyanti paramāndamayā jñānāmburāśayaḥ || 19 ||

Akash means ह, with ई-syllable, Agni र, अँ is the Bijamantra (ह्रीँ) for the goddess. It is able to satisfy all desires. Those Yogis whose mind is pure, meditate on this one syllable Brahma, they are having extreme happiness and like an ocean of knowledge.

वाङ्माया ब्रह्मसूस्तस्मात् षष्ठं वक्त्रसमन्वितम् ।

सूर्योऽवामश्रोत्रबिन्दुसंयुक्तष्टात्तृतीयकः ॥
नारायणेन संमिश्रो वायुश्चाधरयुक् ततः ।
विच्चे नवार्णकोऽर्णः स्यान्महदानन्ददायकः ॥ २० ॥

vāṅmāyā brahmasūstasmāt ṣaṣṭhaṃ vaktrasamanvitam |
sūryo'vāmaśrotrabindusaṃyuktaṣṭāttṛtīyakaḥ ||
nārāyaṇena saṃmiśro vāyuścādharayuk tataḥ |
vicce navārṇako'rṇaḥ syānmahadānandadāyakaḥ || 20 ||

Vak ऐं, Maya ह्रीं, Brahmas or Kama क्लीं, the sixth consonant च with Vaktra आ, Surya म, the right ear उ, and Bindu अं, the third from ट्, i.e. ड, with Narayana आ, Vayu य, with lips ऐ, and विच्चे – this नवार्ण mantra gives pleasure (bliss), and nearness to Brahma to the meditator.

ऐं ह्रीं क्लीं चामुंडायै विच्चे ।

The meaning of this mantra is O Sarasvati, O Laxmi, O Kali, all of us pray to you to obtain the realization of Brahma. O Chandika, here are namaskars to you. Please remove the tight knot of this bond in form of Ignorance and release me from Samsar.

हृत्पुण्डरीकमध्यस्थां प्रातःसूर्यसमप्रभाम् ।
पाशाङ्कुशधरां सौम्यां वरदाभयहस्तकाम् ॥
त्रिनेत्रां रक्तवसनां भक्तकामदुधां भजे ॥ २१ ॥

hṛtpuṇḍarīkamadhyasthāṃ prātaḥsūryasamaprabhām |
pāśaṅkuśadharāṃ saumyāṃ varadābhayahastakām ||
trinetrāṃ raktavasanāṃ bhaktakāmadudhāṃ bhaje || 21 ||

I worship the goddess staying in the middle of my Self (or mind), bright as the morning Sun, holding tongs and Ankusha, with beautiful looks, with the hand in Varad (benefactory) and Abhaya (protecting) mudra, with three eyes, with red cloths and who satisfies the desires of her worshippers.

Trinetra – one having three eyes; eyes denote the source of information or knowledge; because it is Vak which makes me know the world, while I am awake, asleep or dreaming, Vak has three eyes, one for each state of mine. Or, some interprete the states refered as awake, asleep and meditating, the Third eye corresponding to the meditative state.

with red cloths – cloths are the outer covering; the outer layer of Vak is the activity that goes on during the waking state and it is denoted by the red colour, which is a standard colour code in Rigveda for Agni, the activity at Cerebral Cortex.

नमामि त्वां महादेवीं महाभयविनाशिनीम् ।

महाद्दुर्गप्रशमनीं महाकारुण्यरूपिणीम् ॥ २२ ॥

namāmi tvāṃ mahādevīṃ mahābhayavināśinīm |
mahādurgapraśamanīṃ mahākāruṇyarūpiṇīm || 22 ||

I offer namaskars to the goddess destroying fearsome troubles, eliminating mighty obstacles, personified compassion.

यस्याः स्वरूपं ब्रह्मादयो न जानन्ति तस्मादुच्यते अज्ञेया ।
यस्या अन्तो न लभ्यते तस्मादुच्यते अनन्ता ।
यस्या लक्ष्यं नोपलक्ष्यते तस्मादुच्यते अलक्ष्या ।
यस्या जननं नोपलक्ष्यते तस्मादुच्यते अजा ।
एकैव सर्वत्र वर्तते तस्मादुच्यते एका ।
एकैव विश्वरूपिणी तस्मादुच्यते नैका ।
अत एवोच्यते अज्ञेयानन्तालक्ष्याजैका नैकेति ॥ २३ ॥

yasyāḥ svarūpaṃ brahmādayo na jānanti tasmāducyate ajñeyā |
yasyā anto na labhyate tasmāducyate anantā |
yasyā lakṣyaṃ nopalakṣyate tasmāducyate alakṣyā |
yasyā jananaṃ nopalakṣyate tasmāducyate ajā |
ekaiva sarvatra vartate tasmāducyate ekā |
ekaiva viśvarūpiṇī tasmāducyate naikā |
ata evocyate ajñeyānantālakṣyājaikā naiketi || 23 ||

Even Brahma etc. do not know her real form, so she is called Ajneya. We do not find its limit, so she is called Ananta. We can not find the meaning, so she is called Alakshya. Her birth is not known, so she is called Aja. She is found one alone evrywhere, so she is called Eka. She one alone has taken up all the various forms, so she is called Naika. Because of this she is called these various names.

मन्त्राणां मातृका देवी शब्दानां ज्ञानरूपिणी ।
ज्ञानानां चिन्मयातीता शून्यानां शून्यसाक्षिणी ॥
यस्याः परतरं नास्ति सैषा दुर्गा प्रकिर्तिता ॥ २४ ॥

mantrāṇāṃ mātṛkā devī śabdānāṃ jñānarūpiṇī |
jñānānāṃ cinmayātītā śūnyānāṃ śūnyasākṣiṇī ||
yasyāḥ parataraṃ nāsti saiṣā durgā prakirtitā || 24 ||

Amongst the mantras she is the original sounds, in the words she is the essence of knowledge. Amongst the knowledge she is beyond what is comprehensible by analysis and in the Shunya, i.e., during deep meditation, she is the witness to that state. She is well known as Durga, there is

nothing better than her.

तां दुर्गां दुर्गमां देवीं दुराचारविघातिनीम् ।
नमामि भवभीतोऽहं संसारार्णवतारिणीम् ॥ २५ ॥

tāṃ durgāṃ durgamāṃ devīṃ durācāravighātinīm |
namāmi bhavabhīto'haṃ saṃsārārṇavatāriṇīm || 25 ||

I, afraid of the Samsara, offer namaskars to Durga, difficult to know, destroyer of sins and pilot while crossing this sea of Samsara.

इदमथर्वशीर्षं योऽधीते स पञ्चाथर्वशीर्षजपफलमाप्नोति ।
इदमथर्वशीर्षमज्ञात्वा योऽर्चां स्थापयति शतलक्षं प्रजप्त्वापि सोऽर्चासिद्धिं न विन्दति ।
शतमष्टोत्तरं चास्य पुरश्चर्याविधिः स्मृतः ।
दशवारं पठेद्यस्तु सद्यः पापैः प्रमुच्यते ।
महादुर्गाणि तरति महादेव्याः प्रसादतः ॥ २६ ॥

idamatharvaśīrṣaṃ yo'dhīte sa pañcātharvaśīrṣajapaphalamāpnoti |
idamatharvaśīrṣamajñātvā yo'rcāṃ sthāpayati śatalakṣaṃ prajaptvāpi so'rcāsiddhiṃ na vindati |
śatamaṣṭottaraṃ cāsya puraścaryāvidhiḥ smṛtaḥ |
daśavāraṃ paṭhedyastu sadyaḥ pāpaiḥ pramucyate |
mahādurgāṇi tarati mahādevyāḥ prasādataḥ || 26 ||

One who studies this Athrvashirsha gets credit for reciting it five times. One who establishes and worships an image without knowing this Atharvashirsha will not get any benefit, even if does 100,000 recitations.
Repeat this 108 times — that is the method of Purascharana. Even repeating ten times makes him free of sins due to the grace of MahaDevi.

6 Rigvediya Devi Sukta :

ऋग्वेदीय देवीसूक्त *ṛgvedīya devīsūkta*

This sukta appears as mantras 1 to 8 of 125th sukta of 10th Adhyaya of 10th Mandala. The whole sukta is extremely important from view point of understanding the contents of Rigveda. A very deep and abstract sukta, one has to have certain background to understand it properly. Still an attempt is made here to explain it.

One interpretation of this sukta is that Vak was a historical person and daughter of Rishi Ambhrini. She was a Self realized person and had established oneness with

Devi. She gives a verbal expression to her experience as a universal being.

Our interpretation is slightly different, based on the explanation given in the Introduction.

When reciting the sukta in original Sanskrit enjoy the rhythm and be sensitive to the force of Vashat. When reading the translation be aware of the deeper meaning. You will find a new awakening.

In order to aid this, the original Devanagari text for all the 8 mantras is given together, followed by the same in roman transcription followed by translation and explanation.

We start with **विनियोगः** *viniyogaḥ*, a proposition to start the recitation.

अहमित्यष्टर्चस्य सूक्तस्य वागाम्भृणी ऋषिः सच्चित् सुखात्मकः सर्वगतः परमात्मा देवता द्वितीयाया ऋचो जगती शिष्टानां त्रिष्टुप् छन्दः देवीमाहात्म्यपाठे विनियोगः ॥

ahamityaṣṭarcasya sūktasya vāgāmbhṛṇī ṛṣiḥ saccit sukhātmakaḥ sarvagataḥ paramātmā devatā dvitīyāyā ṛco jagatī śiṣṭānāṃ triṣṭup chandaḥ devīmāhātmyapāṭhe viniyogaḥ ||

The Rishi of this sukta of eight verses is Vak, daughter of Rishi Ambhrini, Devata is Paramatma, the second verse is in Jagati meter, remaining in Trishtup. It is proposed to be recited to show significance of Devi.

ॐ अहं रुद्रेभिर्वसुभिश्चराम्यहमादित्यैरुत विश्वदेवैः ।
अहं मित्रावरुणोभा बिभर्म्यहमिन्द्राग्नी अहमश्विनोभा ॥ १ ॥

अहं सोममाहनसं बिभर्म्यहं त्वष्टारमुत पूषणं भगम् ।
अहं दधामि द्रविणं हविष्मते सुप्राव्ये यजमानाय सुन्वते ॥ २ ॥

अहं राष्ट्री संगमनी वसूनां चिकितुषी प्रथमा यज्ञियानाम् ।
तां मा देवा व्यदधुः पुरुत्रा भूरिस्थात्रां भूर्य्यावेशयन्तीम् ॥ ३ ॥

मया सो अन्नमत्ति यो विपश्यति यः प्राणिति य ईं शृणोत्युक्तम् ।
अमन्तवो मां त उप क्षियन्ति श्रुधि श्रुत श्रद्धिवं ते वदामि ॥ ४ ॥

अहमेव स्वयमिदं वदामि जुष्टं देवेभिरुत मानुषेभिः ।
यं कामये तं तमुग्रं कृणोमि तं ब्रह्माणं तमृषिं तं सुमेधाम् ॥ ५ ॥

अहं रुद्राय धनुरा तनोमि ब्रह्मद्विषे शरवे हन्तवा उ ।
अहं जनय समदं कृणोम्यहं द्यावापृथिवी आ विवेश ॥ ६ ॥

अहं सुवे पितरमस्य मूर्द्धन्मम योनिरप्स्वन्तः समुद्रे ।
ततो वि तिष्ठे भुवनानु विश्वोतामूं द्यां वर्ष्मणोप स्पृशामि ॥ ७ ॥

अहमेव वात इव प्रवाम्यारभमाणा भुवनानि विश्वा ।

परो दिवा पर एना पृथिव्यैतावती महिना संबभूव ॥ ८ ॥

*Om̐ ahaṃ rudrebhirvasubhiścarāmyahamādityairuta viśvadevaiḥ |
ahaṃ mitrāvaruṇobhā bibharmyahamindrāgnī ahamaśvinobhā || 1 ||*

*ahaṃ somamāhanasaṃ bibharmyahaṃ tvaṣṭārmuta pūṣaṇaṃ bhagam |
ahaṃ dadhāmi draviṇaṃ haviṣmate suprāvye yajamānāya sunvate || 2 ||*

*ahaṃ rāṣṭrī saṃgamanī vasūnāṃ cikituṣī prathamā yajñiyānām |
tāṃ mā devā vyadadhuḥ purutrā bhūristhātrāṃ bhūryyāveśayantīm || 3 ||*

*mayā so annamatti yo vipaśyati yaḥ prāṇiti ya īṃ śruṇotyuktam |
amantavo māṃ ta upa kṣiyanti śrudhi śruta śraddhivaṃ te vadāmi || 4 ||*

*ahameva svayamidaṃ vadāmi juṣṭaṃ devebhiruta mānuṣebhiḥ |
yaṃ kāmaye taṃ tamugraṃ kṛṇomi taṃ brahmāṇaṃ tamṛṣiṃ taṃ sumedhām || 5 ||*

*ahaṃ rudrāya dhanurā tanomi brahmadviṣe śarave hantavā u |
ahaṃ janaya samadaṃ kṛṇomyahaṃ dyāvāpṛthivī ā viveśa || 6 ||*

*ahaṃ suve pitaramasya mūrddhanmama yonirapsvantaḥ samudre |
tato vi tiṣṭhe bhuvanānu viśvotāmūṃ dyāṃ varṣmaṇupa spṛśāmi || 7 ||*

*ahameva vāta iva pravāmyārabhamāṇā bhuvanāni viśvā |
paro divā para enā pṛthivyaitāvatī mahinā saṃbabhūva || 8 ||*

6.1 Translation and explanation :

This sukta characterizes the Vak, the Language of the brain, gives its relationship to देवाः *devāḥ* and echoes experience of an experienced meditator.

Vak sustains Deva and Soma :

I move about in form of Rudra, Vasu, Aditya and all the gods. Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Agni and both the Ashvina depend upon me. [1]

I sustain the valorous Soma, Tvashta, Pusha, and Bhaga. One who becomes aspecially adopted to gods and worships Soma by offering Havi — to such a Yajaman only I give Wealth. [2]

All the gods mentioned above are regions or activities of a working human mind. We do not have sufficinet space here to explain the significance of each of them. Yajaman

means the Ego of person who is doing the worship or meditation. Other words like Soma, Wealth, etc. are explained previously.

यज्ञ *yajña* is performed via Vak. The collected knowledge is called वसु *vasu* :

I, being the major amongst the gods fit for *Yajna*, knowing the Brahma non-separate from me, and collector of various wealth, am the empress. I am present in all the things existing [in form of Illusion]. I have entered in all the things born. Gods, staying in many abodes, whatever they do, they do for me. [3]

The word Rashtri (empress) indicates that Vak controls everything.

The concept of Yajna is central to Vedas. A full explanation will take many pages, but we give here a very brief note. Basically Yajna means any procedure which leads to : either (i) transformation of information/exsistence at certain level to finer level, (i.e. abstraction); or (ii) transformation of information/existence at certain level to grosser level (i.e. fill up the details).

For example, let us say a group of people is building a road. If they are doing this physical work (a gross level activity) with an idea in mind that this will provide a facility to go from one village to another (the facility is finer level of existence, an abstraction) then they are doing a Yajna. We may say they are doing श्रमयज्ञ *śramayajña*. If they further aware that this facility will make a change in their living, their neighbours, children, etc. will be benefited in various ways, then they are dooing an even finer Yajna, कर्मयज्ञ *karmayajña*.

Yajna can be in opposite direction also. When an artist visualizes a painting (a higher level activity) and then paints it (gross activity), he is doing a Yajna.

As far as worship is concerned, by Yanja we generally understand a ritual used during worship.

All activities of a being are due to Vak. This mantra is an example of self-refence developed by an experienced meditator :

Whatever beings are able to eat, see, breath, or hear – that is due to me only. Those who do not know my this form, are condemned to a lowly exsistence due to that ignorance. O learned one, I am telling you the Ultimate Reality, which is obtainable only by Shraddha, listen — [4]

The grace of Vak makes a person excell in various fields :

I myself describe to you the precious knowledge which is accepted by gods and men alike with pleasure. Whichever person I want to protect, I make him more powerful compared to others. I make him a knower of Brahma, a Rishi or a very intelligent person. [5]

Vak makes one's mind work in "dual-mode" (see Introduction):

I prepare the bow of Rudra to destroy the Asurs who are malicious towards Brahma. I fight with enemies for protecting those who take my refuge. I am spread throught the Earth and the Heaven. [6]

Here, Rudra represents one's Atma. The bow/arrow are the Soma, the Alpha. The meaning of the Earth and the Heaven are already given previously.

Vak, in contact with Atma, comes down to Vaikhari level :

I am the creator of the Sky — the father of this World — over the Basis, Paramatma. My Cause is established in *Samudra* and Waters (the movements of one's mind). That is why I am spread out throught the Creation and also touch the Heaven with my body. [7]

The deepest part of my individual Self, which say "I", is prepared by Vak only, as an covering over the Basis, Paramatma. Samudra refers to the total mass of the consciousness of a person, which waters here refers to the waves on the surface of this consciousness.

The Vak is in contact with Paramatma (because she is inseparable part of Paramatma) at the same time she provides the Creation. She is the link between Paramatma and the percieved world.

Vak compares itself to Vayu (wind) which moves about randomly :

When I start Creation [as the Cause], then I move like Vayu, without help of others, I become active on my own. I am beyond the Earth and the Heaven. I am so due to my own might. [8]

In Introduction we have said that Devi or Vak is the "movement" aspect of the Ultimate Reality (as we can understand it). This movement is random (again as we can understand it), like Brownian motion observed in liquids. Just as a gambler throws dices and gets random figures, on which he may win or lose money, we observe a randomness in the Universe. If the gambler knew the rule by which the next figure on the dices appear, he would have predicted it all the times and won always, but it is not so. Similarly we human beings do not know the Law (ऋत), we can not know it.

7 Our Tradition : Garbo :

गर्भदीप, गरबो : In Gujarat, during Navaratri the women perform puja of Devi and also sing Garba. I need not describe the performance, as it is very popular and well

known. Rather I would like to point out significance of a part of the tradition, from which the tradition got its name.

The original word is गर्भदीप *garbhadīpa* – i.e., a lamp put inside a earthenware vessel or a pot. The pot is special in that it has many small holes all over its surface. Through these holes small points of lights can be seen whenever a oil lamp is put inside the pot. It was a tradition to prepare one or more such Garbhadeep (or Garbo in Gujarati), whenever there is a performance of Garba as part of Navaratri celebration.

This Garbo is very significant. It shows that there is originally only one Atma or Paramatma, seemingly manifested as many Souls. The oil lamp inside the Garbo represents Paramatma, while the ligt points seen on the surface of the pot are the individual Atma. The pot itself represents the Maya and that is why the Garbo is called "Ma no Garbo" in Gujarati. The pot itself represents the Devi Amba.

If the lamp was not enclosed within the pot we would have seen the single lamp, but the pot makes us see many many points of light, just as we see a manifold due to Maya, where actually there is only One.

We, the Gujaratis had this deep tradition of bringing down the highest philosophy to popular level. Unfortuantely it is now slowly forgotten and replaced with something totally opposite. I hope at least some thinking people will revive the old tradition and put the Garba in its right place.